

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of: systematically varying a said return flow rate over said a return time.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said return flow rate decreases over said return time.
3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said return flow rate decreases in a substantially linear manner over said return time.
4. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein said return flow rate is provided by the expression:

$$Z_{ret} = [F_0 + 2(1 - F_0)(t/t_r)] Q_{ret};$$

wherein  $Z_{ret}$  is said return flow rate,  $t$  is time,  $F_0$  has a value greater than 1 and less than or equal to 2,  $t_r$  is said return time and  $Q_{ret}$  is an average return flow rate.

5. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein  $Q_{ret}$  is selected such that the extent of hemolysis during blood processing is less than about 0.1%.
6. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein  $Q_{ret}$  is a value selected from the range of about 50 ml min.<sup>-1</sup> and about 400 ml min.<sup>-1</sup>.

7. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein  $t_r$  is a value selected from the range of about 0.5 min to about 0.9 min.
8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said return flow rate decreases exponentially over said return time.
9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said return flow rate decreases in a substantially exponential manner over said return time.
10. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said return flow rate increases over said return time.
11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of systematically varying said removal flow rate over said a blood removal time.
12. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said removed blood is removed through a needle and said return component is returned through said needle.
13. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said removed blood is removed through a first access needle and said return component is returned through a second access needle.
14. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said processing step comprises the steps of:

separating said removed blood into a plurality of separated blood components including at least one collect component and said return component; and

collecting a collect component.

15. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said separating step comprises conducting said removed blood through a density centrifuge system.
16. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said separating step comprises conducting said removed blood through a centrifugal elutriation system.
17. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said collect component is plasma.
18. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said collect component is red blood cells.
19. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said collect component is white blood cells.
20. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said collect component is platelets.
21. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said blood is removed during a draw cycle and said portion of said return component is returned during a return cycle.
22. (original) The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of sequentially repeating said draw and return cycles for a selected blood processing time.
23. (currently amended) The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of: systematically decreasing said return flow rate during said a return time, where said method reduces the incidence of an access blood vessel infiltration during blood processing.
24. (previously presented) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of:

sequentially repeating said steps of removing blood and of returning blood for a selected blood processing time, whereby the removal flow rate is increased each draw cycle by a selected flow adjustment increment.

25. (previously presented) A method of processing blood, comprising the steps of:

determining the total blood volume of a subject undergoing a blood processing procedure;

removing blood from said subject at a selected removal flow rate thereby generating removed blood, wherein said selected removal flow rate is adjusted during operation of the blood processing procedure based on said total blood volume;

processing said removed blood, thereby generating processed blood including at least one return component; and

returning at least a portion of said return component to said subject at a return flow rate.

26. (previously presented) A method of processing blood, comprising the steps of:

determining the total blood volume of a subject undergoing a blood processing procedure;

removing blood from said subject, thereby generating removed blood;

processing said removed blood, thereby generating processed blood including at least one return component; and

returning at least a portion of said return component to said subject at a selected return flow rate, wherein said selected return flow rate is adjusted during operation of the blood processing procedure based on said total blood volume of said subject.

27. (previously presented) A method of processing blood, comprising the steps of:

determining the total blood volume of a subject undergoing a blood processing procedure;

removing blood from said subject at a removal flow rate thereby generating removed blood, wherein said removal flow rate is adjusted during operation of the blood processing procedure based on said total blood volume;

processing said removed blood, thereby generating processed blood including at least one return component; and

returning at least a portion of said return component to said subject at a return flow rate, wherein said return flow rate is adjusted during operation of the blood processing procedure based on said total blood volume of said subject.

28. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said return and removal flow rates are linearly correlated to said total blood volume of said subject.

29. (original) The method of claim 28 wherein said return and removal flow rates increase with increasing total blood volume of said subject.

30. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said removal flow rate is provided by the expression:

$$Z_{\text{rem}} = (M_{\text{rem}}) \times (V_B) \leq Q_{\text{rem max}} ,$$

wherein  $Z_{\text{rem}}$  is the removal flow rate,  $M_{\text{rem}}$  is a removal flow rate slope,  $V_B$  is the total blood volume of said subject and  $Q_{\text{rem max}}$  is a maximum removal flow rate.

31. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said return flow rate is provided by the expression:

$$Z_{\text{ret}} = (M_{\text{ret}}) \times (V_B) \leq Q_{\text{ret max}}$$

wherein  $Z_{\text{ret}}$  is the return flow rate,  $M_{\text{ret}}$  is a return flow rate slope,  $V_B$  is the total blood volume of said subject, and  $Q_{\text{ret max}}$  is a maximum return flow rate

32. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said subject is a human male and said total blood volume is determined using the expression:

$$V_B = 604 + \left( 3.669 \times 10^{-4} \right) \left( L^3 \right) + (32.187)(W)$$

wherein L is the length of the subject in units of centimeters, W is the weight of the subject in units of kilograms and  $V_B$  is total blood volume in units of milliliters.

33. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said subject is a human female and said total blood volume is determined using the expression:

$$V_B = 183 + \left( 3.561 \times 10^{-4} \right) \left( L^3 \right) + (33.069)(W)$$

wherein L is the length of the subject in units of centimeters, W is the weight of the subject in units of kilograms and  $V_B$  is total blood volume in units of milliliters.

34. (original) The method of claim 30 wherein  $M_{\text{rem}}$  is a value selected from the range of about  $0.0066 \text{ min}^{-1}$  and about  $0.05 \text{ min}^{-1}$  and  $Q_{\text{rem max}}$  is a value selected from the range of about  $100 \text{ ml min}^{-1}$  to about  $160 \text{ ml min}^{-1}$ .
35. (original) The method of claim 34 wherein  $Q_{\text{rem max}}$  is about  $142 \text{ ml min}^{-1}$ .

36. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein  $M_{ret}$  is a value selected from the range of about  $0.025 \text{ min}^{-1}$  and about  $0.200 \text{ min}^{-1}$  and  $Q_{ret \max}$  is a value selected from the range of about  $200 \text{ ml min}^{-1}$  and about  $400 \text{ ml min}^{-1}$ .
37. (original) The method of claim 36 wherein  $Q_{ret \max}$  is about  $302 \text{ ml min}^{-1}$ .
38. (original) The method of claim 30 wherein  $M_{rem}$  is provided by the expression:

$$M_{rem} = (C_{qr}) \times (A_{rem})$$

wherein  $C_{qr}$  is a selectably adjustable processing rate parameter,  $A_{rem}$  is a constant having a value selected from the range of about  $0.01 \text{ min}^{-1}$  to about  $0.05 \text{ min}^{-1}$  wherein the value of  $C_{qr}$  is selected to avoid the occurrence of infiltration of an access blood vessel of said subject.

39. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein  $M_{ret}$  is provided by the expressions:

$$M_{ret} = (C_{qr}) \times (A_{ret}),$$

wherein  $C_{qr}$  is a selectably adjustable parameter,  $A_{ret}$  is a constant having a value selected from the range of about  $0.05 \text{ min}^{-1}$  to about  $0.20 \text{ min}^{-1}$ , and wherein the value of  $C_{qr}$  is selected to avoid discomfort of said subject.

40. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said removed blood is removed through an access needle and said return component is returned through said access needle.
41. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said removed blood is removed through a first access needle and said return component is returned through a second access needle.

42. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein said blood is removed during a draw cycle and said portion of said return component is returned during a return cycle.
43. (original) The method of claim 42 further comprising the step of sequentially repeating said draw and return cycles for a selected blood processing time.
44. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~27~~ 42 wherein said processing step comprises the steps of:
- separating said removed blood into a plurality of separated blood components including at least one collect component and said return component; and
- collecting a collect component.
45. (original) The method of claim 44 wherein said separating step comprises conducting said removed blood through a density centrifuge system.
46. (original) The method of claim 44 wherein said separating step comprises conducting said removed blood through a centrifugal elutriation system.
47. (original) The method of claim 44 wherein said collect component is plasma.
48. (original) The method of claim 44 wherein said collect component is red blood cells.
49. (original) The method of claim 44 wherein said collect component is white blood cells.
50. (original) The method of claim 44 wherein said collect component is platelets.



51. (currently amended) The method of claim 44, further comprising the steps of:

conducting said removed blood through a blood separation system,  
wherein said collect component comprises a first portion of said removed blood;

recirculating a second portion of said removed blood through said blood  
separation system; wherein said second portion corresponds to a recirculated  
component of said removed blood; and

returning a third portion of said removed blood to said subject during a  
return cycle, wherein said third portion corresponds to a return portion of said  
~~removed~~ recirculated component;

wherein the fraction by volume of said removed blood comprising said collected  
component is selected to prevent contamination of said collect component with  
red blood cells.

52. (original) The method of claim 51 further comprising the step of sequentially  
repeating said draw and return cycles for a selected blood processing time.
53. (original) The method of claim 51 further comprising the step of adding an  
anticoagulant agent to said removed blood.
54. canceled
55. canceled
56. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said blood separation system  
comprises a density centrifuge operationally connected to a centrifugal  
elutriation system.

57. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said removed blood has a first hematocrit,  $H_{rem}$ , and said recirculated component has a second hematocrit,  $H_{recir}$ , and wherein the weighted average of the hematocrit of said removed blood and the hematocrit of said recirculated component is less than or equal

$$\text{to } \left( 1 - \frac{H_{rem}}{H_{recir}} \right).$$

58. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein the weighted average of the hematocrit of said removed blood and the hematocrit of said recirculated component is less than 70%.
59. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said removed blood and said recirculated component are conducted through said blood processing system at a first rate,  $R_1$ , during said return cycle and wherein said removed blood and said recirculated component are conducted through said blood processing system at a second rate,  $R_2$ , during said draw cycle, wherein said removed blood has a first hematocrit,  $H_{rem}$ , and said recirculated component has a second hematocrit,  $H_{recir}$ , wherein  $t_{draw}$  is the duration of the draw cycle and  $t_{ret}$  is the duration of the return cycle, wherein the fraction by volume of said removed blood comprising said collected component,  $F_{cmax}$ , is provided by the equation:

$$F_{cmax} = \left( \left( \left[ A^2 + \frac{(1-b)}{(1-D)} \right]^{0.5} - A \right) \right),$$

wherein b is provided by the equation:

$$b = \frac{H_{rem}}{H_{recir}},$$

D is provided by the equation:

$$D = \frac{t_{draw}}{\left( t_{draw} + t_{ret} \right)},$$

A is provided by the equation:

$$A = \frac{\left( \left( \frac{1}{1-D} \right) + \left( \frac{C_r}{D} \right) \right)}{2},$$

and  $C_r$  is provided by the equation:

$$C_r = \frac{\left( \frac{R_{ret}}{R_{draw}} \right)}{\left( \frac{R_{ret}}{R_{draw}} \right)},$$

60. (original) The method of claim 59 wherein b is a value selected from the range of about 0.46 to about 0.85.
61. (original) The method of claim 59 wherein D is a value selected from the range of about 0.60 to about 0.75.
62. (original) The method of claim 59 wherein  $C_r$  is a value selected from the range of about 0.4 to about 0.6.

63. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said collect component is platelets.
64. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said collect component is plasma.
65. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said collect component is white blood cells.
66. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said collect component is white blood cells and platelets.
67. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said removed blood is removed through an access needle and said return component is returned through said access needle.
68. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein said removed blood and said recirculated component are conducted through said blood processing system at a first rate,  $R_1$ , during said return cycle and wherein said removed blood and said recirculated component are conducted through said blood processing system at a second rate,  $R_2$ , during said draw cycle, wherein said removed blood has a first hematocrit,  $H_{rem}$ , and said recirculated component has a second hematocrit,  $H_{recir}$ , wherein  $t_{draw}$  is the duration of the draw cycle and  $t_{ret}$  is the duration of the return cycle, wherein  $V_{svr}$  is the volume of removed blood required to fill a fixed volume return reservoir and  $V_{svnr}$  is the volume of the recirculated component recirculated each draw and return cycle, wherein the fraction by volume of said removed blood comprising said collected component,  $F_{cmax}$ , is provided by the equation:

$$F_{cmax} = \left( \frac{\left( \left[ A^2 + \frac{(1-z)(1-b)}{(1-D)} \right]^{0.5} - A \right)}{(1-z)} \right),$$

wherein  $b$  is provided by the equation:

$$b = \frac{H_{rem}}{H_{recir}},$$

$D$  is provided by the equation:

$$D = \frac{t_{draw}}{(t_{draw} + t_{ret})},$$

$A$  is provided by the equation:

$$A = \frac{\left( \left( \frac{1}{1-D} \right) + \left( \frac{C_r}{D} \right) \right)}{2},$$

$C_r$  is provided by the equation:

$$C_r = \left( \frac{R_{ret}}{R_{draw}} \right), \text{ and}$$

$z$  is provided by the equation

$$z = \frac{\begin{pmatrix} V \\ \text{svnr} \end{pmatrix}}{\begin{pmatrix} V \\ \text{svnr} \end{pmatrix}}.$$